



WHAT ELSE IS IN STORE?

ROMAN HERITAGE IN THE NORTH WEST

RENAISSANCE NORTH WEST
museums for changing lives

FOREWORD

Our heritage – particularly our *Roman* heritage – is now ‘big business’. Visits to Roman sites, Roman material displayed in our museums and the wealth of programmes on television feed our curiosity and whet our appetite to learn more.

The North West of England is blessed with some dramatic Roman sites and some excellent museums with Roman archaeological collections.

Our museums have a vital part to play in telling the story of the Romans in Britain. The objects in our museums and the staff who care for and interpret collections, help the public make sense of the sites themselves. It is the artefacts, and the way in which they are displayed, that demonstrate most forcefully that ‘archaeology is about people’. Further, these collections fire the imagination of a younger generation, who will, in future, have the responsibility of caring for our heritage.

Each succeeding generation applies its own experience to the study of history. New techniques are developed which bring new approaches to old problems, test old assumptions and put forward new hypotheses. The collections that are held in Museums make a valuable contribution to this kind of research.

Through caring for our Roman heritage we give ourselves and future generations the best chance of moving forward, of understanding ourselves and our identity and how we got to where we are now.

David Shotter

Professor Emeritus and Honorary Research Fellow
Centre for North-West Regional Studies, Lancaster University



Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery



Grosvenor Museum

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Tullie House
Museum &
Art Gallery –
Adam Naylor
Whalley

INTRODUCTION

This publication has been produced under the umbrella of Renaissance North West's Collections for the Future programme. Since January 2006 the Group that oversees this programme has developed a regional museums infrastructure using the framework outlined in the Museums Association's 2005 report Collections for the Future.

The main themes of that report were to encourage museums and galleries to improve engagement with collections and the ideas associated with them: how they could make their collections more dynamic by revisiting approaches to acquisitions, disposal, collections mobility and more pro-active and inspiring engagement with audiences; and how they could work together to share knowledge and develop museum professionals for the future.

In 2007, the Collections for the Future Steering Group chose Roman Heritage as a focus for a two-year programme of activity since it was something very distinctive to the North West – a Unique Selling Point if you like – that the Group felt was under-developed and required support. The Roman Heritage Project was led by Carli Douglas, Roman Heritage Development Officer. Her remit was to develop greater access to, and engagement with, the North West's Roman collections through reinterpretation, redisplay, touring exhibitions and sector-wide partnerships.

The case studies in this publication demonstrate how the project has succeeded in making the story of the North West's Roman heritage more widely known and understood by telling that story coherently and dynamically, by increasing understanding and awareness of Roman material held in museums, and by improving access to museum and heritage sites in the region.

Professor Piotr Bienkowski

Deputy Director, Manchester Museum

Chair of the Collections for the Future Steering Group North West



Grosvenor Museum

Case studies

This publication consists of a selection of case studies that highlight projects that have been supported through the Roman Heritage Project. These case studies represent a range of activities under headings such as conservation, redisplay, schools and community projects. The case studies contain practical information such as timescales, budget and 'lessons learnt'. The Collections for the Future Steering Group hopes that museums planning collections development activities will use the case studies as guidance and learn from the experiences of the project partners.



Lancaster City Museum – Claire Wood

The Beacon

Romans on the road

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Beacon at Whitehaven Cumbria developed new educational resources to improve teaching and learning about the Roman army and, in particular, about the lives of soldiers on their journeys from fort to fort.

CONTACT DETAILS

Alan Gillon
Learning Officer
The Beacon Museum
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01946 592302
www.thebeacon-whitehaven.co.uk

TIMESCALE

February 2008 – September 2008

BUDGET

£500 Renaissance North West
Roman Heritage Project
For equipment, packaging
and teachers' resource pack
to accompany the new
Roman session

IMPACT

Pupils learned about Roman life in a new way that increased their interest and improved their learning experiences. The project also helped to strengthen the relationships between The Beacon and Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery and will hopefully lead to more collaborative projects in the future.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In February 2008, the Beacon's Learning Officer attended a training session, coordinated by Renaissance North West, about the potential for museums to develop the Roman heritage offer for schools. This provided the inspiration for a new session at the Beacon about life on the road for a typical Roman legionnaire, which would respond more closely to the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2. The Roman Heritage project supported the purchase of resources for the new session.

The Learning Officer undertook some further research on Roman military life and on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes of work and the National Curriculum programme of study on Invaders and Settlers. He also consulted local teachers for ideas on the type of content and activities they would like to see included in the new session.

The result was 'Romans on the Road', a session for schools that explores, how the soldiers built their temporary camps, what equipment they had to move on forced marches and what personal belongings they might have carried in their satchels.

Replica items for a handling collection to support the session were purchased including a carrying pole, a leather satchel, leather waterskin bottle, cooking equipment, sewing kit with bone and bronze needles and tools such as a shovel and a turf-cutting implement.

The new session was piloted with schools on Summer camps during the holidays and with an adult community group in the autumn. Feedback from the pilot was very positive and the session is now part of the schools' and community programme at The Beacon.

Throughout the project, the Learning Officer worked with staff at Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery. Working with the Cumbria Coast Learning Network, coordinated by Renaissance North West, also helped him greatly to develop his practice.



NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Learning Officer continues to strengthen the session by developing illustrations of Roman forts, roads and encampments to help children imagine the landscape Roman legionnaires occupied. He also promotes the session for free at school assemblies.

PARTNERS

Roman Heritage Network
Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery



Leicester City Museum – Claire Wood

Warrington Museum and Art Gallery

Conservation for Access: the Roman Woodworking Plane

PROJECT SUMMARY

A rare, fragile Roman woodworking plane was conserved and put on display at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery. A specialist conservator was commissioned to create a display box with the exact microclimate required for display.

CONTACT DETAILS

Michelle Hill,
Collections Access Officer,
Warrington Museum
& Art Gallery

mhill1@warrington.gov.uk

01925 443536

www.museum.warrington.gov.uk

TIMESCALE

July 2008 – March 2009

BUDGET

£2,400 Renaissance
North West
Roman Heritage Project
£1000 Conservation of plane
£612 Transport of plane
£520 Microclimate box
£235 Environmental
monitoring equipment
£10 Silica gel
£60 Photography

IMPACT

In March 2009, Warrington Museum and Art Gallery was awarded £250,000 from the Communities Fund of Waste Recycling Group Ltd. This investment is being used to redevelop several galleries, including the Roman Gallery. This will become one of the 'Story of Warrington' galleries, helping to tell the early history of the town through the museum's archaeological collections.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The specialist archaeological conservator from Durham University's Department of Archaeological Conservation Services carried out remedial conservation and recommended that the controlled environmental condition have a constant temperature, with a maximum of 20% relative humidity. To try and achieve this environment, discussions were held with the Senior Technician at Lancashire Museums. He suggested an airtight perspex microclimate box, with a drawer in the base containing active silica gel which can be regenerated, should be designed to display the plane.

These were challenging recommendations because no other object in the collection is

stored or displayed in such a particularly controlled environment. The conservator stored the plane temporarily in the ideal conditions at Durham University, whilst the museum commissioned an appropriate display case. The Lancashire Museum Service Technical Services Section constructed the case.



I thought it remarkable how solidly constructed the plane was, which had probably contributed to its preservation, and also how little the design of these tools have changed over 2000 years – no doubt they did the job very well.

**Jennifer Jones, Conservator,
Department of Archaeology,
Durham University**



NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The conserved woodworking plane is now one of the star Roman objects in the new Roman Gallery.

There are also plans to feature the plane in education sessions at the museum, both on Roman design technology and on the importance of Warrington as an industrial Roman settlement.

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

It can be difficult to find and commission specialists within a particular timeframe. Commissioning both the conservator, and particularly the technician to make the box, took longer than anticipated and forced the project deadlines to slip.

Try to allow a contingency in the budget. Because of the special environmental conditions recommended, funds from the collections care budget had to be used initially to cover the costs of the display box.

PARTNERS

Roman Heritage Network



Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

The Digitisation of the Hart Collection of Roman Coins

PROJECT SUMMARY

Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery made an important collection of Roman coins accessible through the council's local history website, a DVD and a CD. The project involved the digitisation of the collection and research that improved documentation and revealed some of the stories associated with the coins.

CONTACT DETAILS

Nick Harling, Keeper of
Community & Social History,
Blackburn Museum and
Art Gallery

nick.harling@blackburn.gov.uk
01254 667130

www.cottontown.org

TIMESCALE

March 2008 – July 2009

BUDGET

£4000 Renaissance North West
Roman Heritage Project

£3000 contribution to
Documentation Officer post

£500 macro lens for the
digital camera

£500 materials, production
and distribution of Image
Catalogue DVD and CD

IMPACT

The Hart Roman coin collection is accessible on-line so that previously unseen coins can be studied. Coin enthusiasts are provided with descriptions and interesting stories associated with the collection. This creates a more diverse learning tool and provides an insight into our Roman past.

The impact of the website is being monitored by Blackburn Library and the number of hits on the Hart Collection pages are being counted.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The Collections Development Officer's work identified the Hart Roman coin collection as a potential for funding at the same time as the museum was recruiting a part-time documentation officer. The funding enabled the post to be extended to full-time and a volunteer with an Ancient History degree and an interest in the Hart collection was appointed.

The Curator of Numismatics at The Manchester Museum also acted in an advisory role throughout the research and helped identify and reclassify some of the coins.

A macro lens and additional lighting cube for the photography was purchased to capture high quality images of both sides of each coin.

Information was updated on the database and then converted to appear on the council's local history website, Cotton Town.

It was important to ensure that the interpretation of the coins for the Cotton Town website met with the needs of its users. Therefore web pages contain the coins which have the most interesting associated stories, as opposed to describing individual coins and attempting to show as many as possible.

To meet the needs of researchers, the museum is producing an image catalogue on DVD. Consultation with teachers was undertaken to produce a CD that has the most interesting coins, together with appropriate information and interpretation for schools. The schools' CD is distributed free of charge with the museum's existing Roman loan handling collection box.

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The museum plans to develop a touring exhibition based on the coins, called 'The twelve Caesars' and is also negotiating with the Ribchester Roman Museum, who would like to borrow some of the coins, which were excavated at Ribchester.

This has been a fantastic project to work on. Digitising the collection has opened up the possibilities of using the collection and allowed some new avenues of research. It has even thrown up a few surprises! I have used the collection and my work on it as a basis for lectures given to visitors to the museum and it has proved to be a popular topic. On a personal level, it has allowed me to put many of my skills into practice and learn some new ways of working too.

**Vinai Solanki, Documentation Officer,
Blackburn Museum
and Art Gallery**

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Have a reasonably accurate idea of the scope of the collection before you start so you can accurately estimate the amount of time required to complete the project.

PARTNERS

- Roman Heritage Network
- Manchester Museum
- Blackburn Library
- The Salt Museum
- Ribchester Roman Museum



Rossendale Museum

National Archaeology Week, Roman Activity Weekends

PROJECT SUMMARY

Rossendale Museum participated in National Archaeology Week in 2007 and 2008. By linking with a high profile national initiative the museum strengthened engagement with its community, improved its offer to family audiences, and increased access to an underused collection of Roman coins.

CONTACT DETAILS

sandra.cruise@lancashire.gov.uk

01706 260785

www.lancashire.gov.uk/acs/sites/museums/index.asp

TIMESCALE

June 2007 – May 2009

BUDGET

£2,000 Renaissance North West Roman Heritage Project

£700 freelancers to deliver the family programmes in 2007

£1000 freelancers to deliver the family programmes in 2008

£300 for reinterpretation of the coin display in 2008

IMPACT

Quantitative evaluation of the visitor figures for 2007 show that visits had increased by 35% on the Saturday and by 350% on the Sunday, compared to the same weekend in 2006. The figures were also up by 400% for the preceding weeks in July 2007. Of this, 200% was attributable directly to participation in the sessions.

WHAT HAPPENED?

During summer 2007, the museum commissioned two facilitators to run specialist Roman sessions for families on a weekend during National Archaeology Week. The Saturday session was a mosaic-making family workshop; the Sunday consisted of a live interpretation session entitled 'Meet a Roman Soldier'.

The Roman soldier demonstrated aspects of Roman life, such as how the Roman invasion affected Britain and its inhabitants. The participants looked at a selection of Roman artefacts and learned about everyday life. This helped to put the museum's own collection in context, as coins could now be seen as part of a bigger picture.

The success led to further funding in 2008. An extra facilitator was commissioned and a session on designing Roman shields was added to the programme. This time, four half-day 'hands-on' workshops were developed. Every session was fully booked and so two further half-day sessions were organised.

The success of the new sessions, and the interest they generated in the Roman coin collection, led the museum to consider ways in which they could improve the quality of the display and interpretation of the Roman collection.

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

In 2009, the renamed Festival of British Archaeology took place over two weeks in the summer and Rossendale Museum will hold a finds identification day. The museum will also repeat the 'Meet a Roman Soldier' session, to help launch the new coin display. Visit: www.festivalofbritarchaeology.org.uk

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Never underestimate a small collection. With a little imagination and funding it is possible to enhance an otherwise side-lined collection.



It was fantastic and informative. The children were able to have 'hands-on' with equipment and be involved with the presentation.

All of it was very educational and entertaining.

Families attending the 'Meet a Roman Soldier' session



PARTNERS

Roman Heritage Network
The Manchester Museum
Portable Antiquities Scheme
Touchstones Rochdale



The Salt Museum – Claire Wood

The Salt Museum

Image and Identity

PROJECT SUMMARY

A partnership of museums in Northwich, Chester, Manchester, Blackburn, Warrington and Nantwich developed a touring exhibition and programme of family activities. The project drew on their combined collections to explore some of the images and identities of Roman civilians who lived in the region.

CONTACT DETAILS

Tom Hughes, Community
& Education Officer,
Salt Museum, Northwich
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01606 271640
www.saltmuseum.org.uk

TIMESCALE

July 2008 – May 2010

BUDGET

£5250 Renaissance North West
Roman Heritage Project
£1130 Exhibition Panels and
purchase of image copyright
from British Museums
£230 Object movement: van
hire and insurance in transit
£1600 Handling artefacts &
interactives
£275 Launch event Roman
interpreters and refreshments
£1310 Roman living history
interpreters at family events in
Northwich and Chester
£600 Coin striking die based
on exhibited coin and blanks
for family events
£300 Clay, card and paint for
family and school events
Museum added contribution
£195 & around 5 weeks
staff time



The Salt Museum – Claire Wood

IMPACT

Front of house staff had a lot of positive feedback from visitors and during the course of the project the visitor numbers increased by 19% on the same period in 2008.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Each museum contributed objects for the exhibition, both from its displays and stores. The Curator of Archaeology and Head of Human Cultures at The Manchester Museum, helped to conserve and prepare some of the objects for the exhibition.

Replicas of a number of these objects were commissioned, to be made available on a handling table beside the case containing the originals. Other replicas were also purchased, also for handling.

A programme of family activities has also been developed to run at weekends or holidays alongside the exhibition. Activities include exploring Roman beauty and hairstyles, creating replicas of some of the objects in the exhibition such as clay face-pots and the actor's mask, and live interpretation based around a Roman doctor. Using high resolution images of a Caracalla Denarius coin from Blackburn, a coin-striking die was made so that visitors could produce steel replicas to take away.

The exhibition began its tour at the Salt Museum in January 2009. The funding will also cover staging the exhibition or activities in the future at both Nantwich and Warrington museums.

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The replica items will be distributed among the museums to be used in their schools or family programmes.

The partnership hopes to continue to work together and to look next at the theme of 'Celtic' stone heads.

A legacy of the project is a website which will provide further information and details of some of the research that is not featured in the exhibition.

Material from Roman Northwich that was held in the stores of other museums has been transferred or loaned to the Salt Museum and is on permanent display.

This project has brought together some of the best Roman collections from around the region. It really showcases the top-drawer nature of the objects held in these museums and through touring the exhibit, is going to bring them to a much wider audience.

Vinai Solanki, Documentation Officer,
Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

It is important to ensure that the exhibition and activities are flexible enough to meet the different needs of the partners.

The success of the handling material depends on using good quality bespoke replicas made by experienced craftsmen based on the partners' collections.

PARTNERS

Grosvenor Museum
Museum and Art Gallery
Warrington Museum and Art Gallery
The Manchester Museum
Nantwich Museum



The Salt Museum – Claire Wood



Ribchester Roman Museum

Website redevelopment

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project created an impressive new website, more tailored to the needs and interests of its users and potential users, which has raised the profile of the museum and opened up much more of the collection to a wider audience.

CONTACT DETAILS

Patrick Tostevin, Curator
Ribchester Roman Museum
ribchestermuseum@btconnect.com
Tel. 01254 878261
www.ribchestermuseum.org

TIMESCALE

June 2007 – September 2007

BUDGET

£2,500 Renaissance North West Roman Heritage Project to commission Workshop Marketing
£600 Ribchester Museum Trust for the purchase of the digital camera

IMPACT

Between April to December 2008, the number of hits to the website increased from 100 to 160 per day due to the improved quality of the site and because the site has been made 'search engine friendly'.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The curator produced all of the content with the aid of a newly purchased digital camera, which allows future content to be delivered in-house. The website went live in October 2007.

The website is professional, attractive and engaging. The educational potential of the collections has been realised, with the sections on archaeology, prehistory and Roman Ribchester, and materials for a pre and post-visit information pack for teachers. There is also useful content for the general visitor and families and the 'Exhibits Gallery' which showcases the collection.

Quantitative evaluation shows there has been a 60% increase in research enquiries and a 10% increase in school visits to the museum as a direct result of teachers accessing the site. Fifty more objects have been digitised for the website and overall, there are now 100% more objects available on-line.

No formal qualitative evaluation of the website has yet taken place, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the site is being well received by visitors, and in particular by schoolteachers. One unusual outcome has been an increase in the number of enquiries from foreign students, many with specialist knowledge, looking for educational placements at the museum. As a result, the museum plans to provide more student placements in the future, in an effort to build partnerships with other educational institutions.



Ribchester Roman Museum website is extremely user friendly and made researching a visit to Ribchester very easy.

**Jean Lonsdale,
Padiham Green C of E
Primary School**



NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The museum's ultimate goal is to host a comprehensive illustrated database of the museum's most significant objects on-line.

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

It is important to plan capacity carefully in order to generate initial content and keep the site updated.

Ensure the website is 'search engine friendly', by using key words to improve the volume and quality of traffic to the site from search engines, and by choosing a reputable hosting company.

PARTNERS

Roman Heritage Network



Stockport Story Museum – Claire Wood

Stockport Story Museum

Redevelopment of the Origins Gallery

PROJECT SUMMARY

The redisplayed Origins Gallery at the Stockport Story Museum highlights the important finds from the Iron Age hilltop site at Mellor. The project team generated interesting design, interpretation and interactive ideas for the gallery. The project also levered in funds from the Mellor Archaeological Trust and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

CONTACT DETAILS

Joanne Dunn,
Collections Access Officer
Stockport Story Museum
(Stockport Museums Service)
joanne.dunn@stockport.gov.uk
0161 477 3701
www.stockportstory.org.uk

TIMESCALE

January 2008 – August 2009

BUDGET

£3000 Renaissance North West
Roman Heritage Project

To cover the costs of
interpreting the two themes of
'Food and Farming' and 'Trade
and Status' which will have a
strong Romano-British focus

£10,000 Mellor
Archaeological Trust

£8,000 Stockport Metropolitan
Borough Council

To cover the remaining costs
of the gallery

IMPACT

The Origins Gallery first opened in 2005 and evaluation showed that it was less popular than other galleries. Visitors wanted to see more objects and a more interactive approach to interpretation. This project changed that and made visits to Stockport Story Museum a more enjoyable and educational experience.

WHAT HAPPENED?

A project team was set up to reappraise the gallery and develop a new concept for a fun, accessible, interactive, family friendly gallery. The team was made up of curators, learning and outreach officers from the Museums Service, colleagues from the University of Manchester's Archaeological Unit and the Mellor Archaeological Trust. They decided to engage visitors by adopting a themed approach. The three themes ('Death and Burial', 'Food and Farming' and 'Trade and Status') are based on stories the collections can support, as well as links the Mellor site has with other archaeological sites nearby.

Around 20 to 30 new objects are now displayed in the new gallery. Key objects are exhibited in three large cases, with further material from the collections stored in drawers underneath as reference material that can be easily accessed for future specialist study.

Working on the redevelopment of the Origins gallery at Stockport Story Museum has been a great experience, it has brought together people from many different disciplines, and has allowed us to be really creative in our interpretation.

Pamela Pearson,
Audience Development Officer

As well as graphics, text panels and aerial photographs, a short film using computer generated imaging brings the Mellor site to life. A particular feature of the collection, the Iron Age 'Mellor Pot' is displayed separately. As its function is unknown, visitors are asked to think about which theme they feel it would best fit. A series of interactive displays explore archaeology as a discipline, and there is a storybook trail for younger visitors that explore the three themes through a fictional character called Fyn.

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The new gallery is scheduled to open in January 2010. The excavations and research at Mellor are ongoing and the gallery will continue to evolve and grow as more finds are added.

Stockport MBC is committed to supporting the Museums Service in maintaining its successful partnership with the Mellor Archaeological Trust.

TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Get a good mix of staff from different backgrounds on the team as the combination of strengths and skills can be very rewarding. Our project team is made up of curators, informal learning staff, Mellor Archaeological Trust's Project Education Officer and other Trust members. It has resulted in some very interesting ideas.

PARTNERS

- Roman Heritage Network
- Mellor Archaeological Trust
- University of Manchester Archaeological Unit



Lancaster City Museum – Claire Wood

Lancaster City Museum

Redisplay of the Roman Gallery

PROJECT SUMMARY

The discovery of a Roman soldier's tombstone in Lancaster in 2005 provided the catalyst for the redisplay of the Roman collection at Lancaster City Museum. Funding also assisted the museum in developing a more engaging and accessible display.

CONTACT DETAILS

Heather Dowler,
Assistant Keeper,
Lancaster City Museum
heather.dowler@lancashire.gov.uk
01524 555610

TIMESCALE

July 2008-March 2009

BUDGET

£5000 from Renaissance North West Roman Heritage Project
£2500 Lancaster City Council
£2300 from LCMS including contributions from Lancaster City Council, and LCMS Learning budgets
£400 Heritage Lottery Fund (to cover installation of the Tombstone)
£2100 Lancashire Museums, in kind contribution for staff time

IMPACT

The project has increased staff knowledge about the Roman collection giving visitors a better and easily accessible source of knowledge. The redisplay also helped to strengthen the museum's programme of activities for schools and families providing them with better displays and resources.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Following a very successful touring exhibition from National Museums Liverpool, entitled 'Living with the Romans' a programme of family activities in which up to thirty families participated was created. This enabled the museum to carry out some limited consultation with visitors that has informed the development of the redisplay of the Roman collection.

In designing the new space, the museum removed the existing display cases and replaced them with a smaller number of wall mounted cases, to create more room and allow visitors more opportunities to interact with each other and see the objects more clearly. The new cases were designed to be more flexible to allow objects to be rotated from time to time with others from the stores and so that new acquisitions could be added easily.

Interactive exhibits were developed, for example a magnetic Roman board game, similar to draughts but based on a Roman game. Another interactive features a mannequin Roman soldier that visitors are invited to dress, choosing the appropriate clothing and armour from a selection provided.

The display themes are based around objects from Lancaster and include references to the surrounding area and the Roman roads. Death and Burial is also a key theme, to give context to the tombstone, which is at the centre of the space and has seating around so that visitors can take time to reflect and view it more closely. The new display opened in April 2009.

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The museum is planning new schools' sessions to link with the new display. Working with a specialist live interpretation company, it is also adapting a session that focuses on the life of the soldier commemorated on the tombstone.



Researching the Roman period and our Roman collections has meant that I have personally learned a great deal from the project. Looking after such a diverse collection, I rarely have the time to focus on one subject area and learn about it so it has been quite a luxury to spend time researching the Roman period and our Roman collections.

**Heather Dowler, Assistant Keeper
Lancaster City Museum**



TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Moving and installing a large object presented a number of issues. It required extra planning time, negotiation skills and specialist advice.

When researching the look and feel of the new gallery, it would have been useful to visit other galleries and see interactives elsewhere.

PARTNERS

Lancashire County Museums Service
Lancaster City Council

OTHER PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Two other partnership projects were developed as part of the Roman Heritage Project:

The Ceramics Database

The collections related information gathered by the Collections Development Officer, and most specifically that relating to Roman ceramics held by Cumbrian Museums, was passed to Alex Croom of Tyne and Wear Museums to feed into their Hadrian's Wall Ceramic Database. This project aims to make the information relating to Roman pottery available to all through recording it on a single database thus enabling data from different sites and different periods to be compared.

The outcome will give an overview of the pottery in use in the military north as well as providing the opportunity to explore regional differences of supply and production. The resulting analysis of the pottery from the different sites will be available to the general public on the project's website, highlighting their regional and national significance. The project will ensure the museums involved have the most up-to-date identification and dating of the pottery in their Collections. Collaborating on this project was seen as an opportunity to include information relating to pottery held by museums in Cumbria and the west end of Hadrian's Wall and also as a way of strengthening links between the North East and North West regions.

For further information see:

www.twmuseums.org.uk/archaeology/ceramic%20database/introduction.html

Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery





The Touching the Wall Festival

The Touching the Wall Festival is a programme of educational activities and events that took place in the summer of 2009. The programme will provide children with the opportunity to participate in immersive 'hands-on-history' and experiential learning activities associated with Hadrian's Wall. A group of Roman period enactors including craftspeople, multi-cultural citizens, natives and soldiers will engage the children in activities that bring the people, and the way they lived, to life. Children will be encouraged to think about their experiences and their meaning through creative learning as well as engaging in practical activities. The main programme is funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund and focuses on sites in the central section of Hadrian's Wall. However, funding through the Roman Heritage Project will ensure that the benefits of the programme spread to include Senhouse Museum and children in west Cumbria. It is a particular objective of the programme to engage with schools and children who do not have a track record of this sort of experiential learning activity.

For further information, see: www.hadrians-wall.org

LEGACY

The Roman Heritage Development Officer post has built up valuable relationships and increased understanding of the significance of the region's Roman heritage and collections. The initiative has established two clear priorities for the region. Firstly, that there is enormous strength in taking a thematic approach in developing outstanding collections that express some of the unique qualities and characteristics of the region's heritage. Secondly, that there is a real imperative to raise the quality, profile and ambition of the museum offer in order to increase access, visits and enjoyment of these collections.

The Roman Heritage Development Officer succeeded in raising the understanding and profile of Roman material in regional collections, and supported a wide range of innovative approaches to increasing access. A fundamental part of continuing this work is establishing clear priorities and powerful and effective partnerships to drive development.

The primary focus for the next stage of this work is along the western end of Hadrian's Wall, to create an holistic approach and relationship between the breathtaking experience of the Wall, as it runs through the frontier city of Carlisle to the coast at Ravenglass, with the remarkable museum objects that tell the story of the Romans in Cumbria.

A partnership between Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd and the British Museum is developing in order to embed these developments of the Roman Heritage initiative with major capital developments and regeneration initiatives in Carlisle but also to extend relationships to Senhouse and Roman Maryport. The partnership of Renaissance North West with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd is particularly significant, as it binds together developments along the whole length of the wall and increases out strategic capability and ambitions.

Renaissance North West is committed to ensuring that people living inside and outside the region have dynamic opportunities to experience and engage with the Roman Heritage of the North West, that start with a powerful frontier story. It is hoped that the wider regional story will continue to develop in places such as Ribchester, Chester and Lancaster, and that this in turn creates a nationally significant focus for understanding our Roman past.

Emma Anderson, Manager, Renaissance North West

Dr Nigel Mills, Director of World Heritage and Access, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd



Grosvenor Museum

Museums with Roman collections

- 1 Armit Trust Museum
- 2 The Beacon
- 3 Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery
- 4 Bolton Museum & Archive Service
- 5 Bury Art Gallery & Museum
- 6 Gallery Oldham
- 7 The Garstang Museum of Archaeology
- 8 Grosvenor Museum
- 9 Harris Museum & Art Gallery
- 10 The History Shop
- 11 Kendal Museum
- 12 Lancaster City Museum
- 13 Manchester City Galleries
- 14 The Manchester Museum
- 15 Museum of Lancashire
- 16 Museum of Science & Industry
- 17 Nantwich Museum
- 18 Penrith Museum
- 19 Ribchester Roman Museum
- 20 Roman Bath House
- 21 Rossendale Museum
- 22 Saddleworth Museum & Art Gallery
- 23 Salford Museum & Art Gallery
- 24 The Salt Museum
- 25 Senhouse Roman Museum
- 26 Setantii Museum
- 27 South Ribble Museum
- 28 Stockport Story Museum
- 29 Touchstones Rochdale
- 30 Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
- 31 Warrington Museum & Art Gallery
- 32 The Whitworth Art Gallery
- 33 Wigan Pier Heritage Centre
- 34 Williamson Art Gallery & Museum
- 35 World of Glass
- 36 World Museum Liverpool



ROLE / POST

The priorities of the Collections Development Officer were to focus on the development of greater public access to, and engagement with, these region-wide collections. This was achieved through:

- I** helping staff in regional museums achieve a better understanding of collections within their care
- II** increasing communication between staff who care for Roman objects and collections
- III** providing opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise through professional development, either through formal training courses and workshops or less formal networking events
- IV** support for the development of skills and knowledge of the region's curators, materially benefit museums and collections and to raise the profile of the region's Roman Heritage.

Links between individual museum collections and objects were identified, as were opportunities for collaborative working or partnerships.

Those museums with feasible collection development ideas were asked to complete a project brief. Support and advice from the Collections Development Officer continued throughout the life of each project and included brokering relationships, sourcing freelancers and education resources, providing collections-related information in preparation for loan requests, providing subject specialist advice and couriering objects to and from museums for identification or conservation.

Sixteen museums received funding for twenty-three distinct projects. The Roman Heritage Project ran from January 2007 March 2009.



STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT & GUIDANCE

A Roman Heritage Working Group was established as part of the project, the members of which were chosen because of their knowledge of the region's Roman heritage or because they were responsible for large Roman collections. It was envisaged that the Working Group would provide guidance and support to the Collections Development Officer and ratify decisions on project funding and interventions.

The group also had a responsibility to assist with the formation of a Roman Heritage Network. This was conceived as a way of disseminating information, increasing opportunities for communication and networking, and increasing the ability to access expertise.

The Network continues to support those who look after, or interpret, Roman objects and collections, but who may or may not be subject specialists. The Roman Heritage Information Network has an online forum (www.rhinonorthwest.org). This contains a range of information, including a list of which museums hold Roman collections, experts that can be contacted for advice, training and workshops. The objective is that the Network would not just exist virtually, but that there would be regular seminars, training sessions and networking events where collections and learning staff would get the chance to talk to each other about issues affecting the care and interpretation of the region's Roman Heritage.

MEMBERS:

Malcolm Chapman, The Manchester Museum (Chair)
 Andrew Backhouse, Culture North West
 Sue Hughes, Grosvenor Museum
 Tim Padley, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
 Bryan Sitch, The Manchester Museum
 Edmund Southworth, Lancashire County Museums Service
 Patrick Tostevin, Ribchester Roman Museum



BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

STEERING GROUP

In the North West, the Collections for the Future Steering Group oversees the region's Renaissance plans concerning collections care, management, interpretation and display programmes, with a view to widening access and user engagement. It has been developing new and innovative ways of working that put users at the heart of collections activity and that make best use of available resources. In 2008-09, through the Collections for the Future programme, £273K was invested across 58 regional museums and galleries through 105 interventions. We have calculated that only four museums – 2% of the museums in the entire North West – have not benefited from this programme since it began in 2006, a remarkable statistic that demonstrates the reach of this programme.

MUSEUMS FOR CHANGING LIVES

Renaissance is the Museums Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA) national £300 million programme to transform England's regional museums. For the first time ever, investment from central government is helping regional museums across the country to raise their standards and deliver real results in support of education, learning, community development and economic regeneration. Renaissance is helping museums to meet people's changing needs and to change people's lives.

For more information visit www.renaissancenw.org.uk
or contact the Renaissance North West team on **0161 235 8810**

Published by Renaissance North West 2009

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